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# MEASURE



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## CONTENTS

An Open Letter	MISS GERTRUDE KIRK	51
The House on the Hill	G. R. SCHREIBER, '44	55
Sargasso Sea	S. D. THEODOSIS, '42	61
Literary Sketches	CHARLES J. PEITZ, JR., '41	64
Willa Cather: Lodestar	ROBERT LECHNER, '41	68
The Story of Jeff Downey	JOHN FORD, '44	73
Aristotle, the Biologist	JACK PATTON, '42	77
A Wish (Poem)	G. R. SCHREIBER, '44	80
Pictorial Composition	CHARLES J. PEITZ, JR., '41	81
Thought Points at You	RICHARD SCHEIBER, '41	87
Editorial:		
Gratitude	EDWARD G. ANCEL, '41	93
Book Reviews:		
<i>Broadsides</i>	ARTHUR LOEW, '41	95
<i>Fame is the Spur</i>	KENNETH MARLIN, '43	96
<i>Revolt</i>	ROBERT CAUSLAND, '43	98
Exchanges	FRANCIS KINNEY, '43	101

# An Open Letter

N. F. C. C. S.

*Miss Gertrude Kirk, the President of the National Federation of Catholic College Students, has been kind enough to send us a reply to Richard Scheiber's recent article on that organization. Even as the honest search of the last issue deserved your attention, so this excellent explanation merits the study of every honest student.*

Mr. Edward G. Ancel, Editor,  
*Measure*,  
St. Joseph's College, Collegeville, Indiana.

February 9, 1941

Dear Mr. Ancel:

Recently I received a copy of *Measure*, Autumn, 1940, issue. The article "Demise of Rule of Thumb" by Richard Scheiber was especially well handled and deserves the attention of every Catholic student. I might say that in a sense, the article was a tribute to the National Federation of Catholic College Students; and we, its members, deeply appreciate the publicity and consideration.

The author of the theme is a student in a college which is not yet a member of the NFCCS. His interpretation of the organization demonstrates very clearly that he has given the Federation idea considerable thought and now has arrived at the conclusion that the Federation is not only a sound approach but it is both practical and necessary. He frequently expressed his conviction that there is a definite need for unity in both thought and action among all the Catholic college students of the country. To use the writer's own words: "If the present status of affairs ever called for an organizing element, then it is most assuredly now."

Unified action increases the value of the act, and the Federation provides a means for such unified action among college students. Mr. Scheiber voiced the opinion of all the members of the NFCCS when he said that, if its only purpose were to unify the interests of its members, it would be justified. And who has a better reason or a stronger basis for oneness of action than the students who are members of the Church which is One in Christ?

The Federation fills another important need—it is a need for a means of developing good Catholic lay leaders who will effectively influence national life. There is no doubt of the splendid benefits that would come



from the efforts of just one Catholic who would be respected nationally for his sound and reasoned judgment, for his genuine ability, and strength of character. How else can you train or even discover such a leader, except through a national organization? What could be a more practical way of developing him for a future that must of necessity deal with practical situations. The writer has shown a keen insight into the possibilities of the Federation in this regard.

He has cleverly noted that on the national student level at present "the Catholic element is conspicuously absent." The field is controlled or dominated entirely by non-Catholic student organizations who claim to represent American youth. This claim will continue to be made until Catholic students have developed their own official national organization. Incidentally, in this connection, the American Student Union probably has still more influence on the college campuses of the nation than either of the two student groups mentioned by the writer—the American Youth Congress and the Christian Student Movement. The A.S.U. is thoroughly organized and keeps the campuses well supplied with literature on its numerous projects and endeavors.

There is one quality common to all such organizations which might well be imitated by our Catholic students. That quality is their untiring zeal and enthusiasm for their 'causes.' Should not we, the Catholic students, be much more zealous in our cause, than they, since ours provides us with the opportunity of living the life of the Church more fully, since ours is the cause of Christ?

The writer then turns his thoughts from a consideration of the need for such a Federation to the possibilities of this Federation filling that need. In short, he challenges those responsible to give him, as yet an interested observer, a more definite guarantee of Catholic unity. This guarantee necessarily involves a more thorough discussion of the structure of the Federation and the concrete means it uses to accomplish its stated purpose. Its methods are principally three—Councils, Congresses, and Commissions. Each has its specific function and each has its particular characteristics.

The Council is an executive body. On a Regional level, it is composed of two or more delegates (depending on the enrollment) of each college in that Region. It is the function of this body to determine the details of the organization; i.e., its meetings, its program, its officers, its finances, etc. Here the problems of the colleges within the Region are discussed, and the projects and interests of an individual college are brought to the attention of all others.

The position of a delegate is an important one. He must represent his own college or university at the meetings of the Council, and he must also represent the Federation when he returns to his college. In other words, the delegate must be the connecting link between the college and the Federation. He must see that the suggestions and the information

he has received at the Council meeting reach the proper student groups on the campus. He must encourage some club to make use of these suggestions and to develop them on the campus level. This is a most important factor. The Federation encourages the development of activity on the local scene. In this way, it reaches more students; it gives more of them an opportunity to exercise their own initiative, and it trains more of them in a thoroughly practical manner. To reduce programs and projects to the campus level should be the principal work of these delegates.

You now may ask: "How can these delegates contact each group and club on the campus and give them the information they have received at the Council meeting?" Most colleges have solved this problem by permitting the delegates to present their report of the Regional Council meeting to their Student Council, Student Activity Board, or a similar organization. This is done because ordinarily the Student Council provides for representation from every club and every class on the campus, and therefore, represents every student interest. This means that the delegates in one meeting can contact every organization in their college.

A question has been raised whether such a limited number of delegates can adequately fulfill these duties. Is too much expected of the two delegates? Do you think they could function more effectively if more students were to attend the meeting? The colleges already in the Federation have met this problem, and they have handled it in different ways. Some permit several students to attend the Council meeting, but recognize only a specific number of delegates whenever a question is put to a vote. Others have developed small groups on their campuses called "NFCCS Executives" whose duty it is to strengthen the influence of the Federation on their campus and to encourage all local groups to cooperate with the Federation plans and suggestions.

A second means of guaranteeing Catholic unity is the Regional Congress. It is more or less a general meeting opened to all students of the colleges within the Region. It is usually held only once a year whereas the meetings of the Regional Council are sometimes as frequent as once a month, depending on the locality and convenience of traveling, etc. The Congress is an opportunity for every student to participate and express an opinion.

The third organ of the Federation, and the most vital, is the Commissions. They are the special interest groups and are responsible for the actual work of the Federation. They provide the delegates with a convenient method of channelizing the various activities which are presented for their consideration and discussion. For example, they operate in this way: One college assumes Chairmanship of a Commission on Student Forums. A student is named Chairman. The members of the Commission investigate the possibilities for student participation in this field and make recommendations to all the delegates at the Council



meeting. The Commission seeks to stimulate cooperation among the colleges in this scope of activity and encourages action particularly within the individual student bodies.

The Commissions do not duplicate the work that is already being done by another group. Instead the Commission, whenever possible, operates through this same group of students, benefitting by their experience, and encouraging them to cooperate with other colleges in their projects.

This means that the Federation does not originate student groups to rival those of a similar nature on each campus. But on the contrary, the NFCCS provides the groups already functioning with a means of broadening their programs and making them more effective and generally useful.

Two examples may be cited to demonstrate the existence of harmony and cooperation between the Federation Commission and previously established special interest groups. Marquette University, which is certainly the center of activity in the field of the Catholic college press, has recently assumed National Chairmanship of an NFCCS Commission on the Press. Likewise, the College of Mount St. Joseph-on-the-Ohio in the heart of C.S.M.C. interest, has taken over the NFCCS National Commission on Mission Study. Through such connections, both the Federation and the original organizations benefit.

You realize, of course, that the underlying motive for all Federation activities is the training of Catholic leaders—to teach Catholic students how to do, by doing; to teach them to lead, by leading. The real success of the Federation will have to be measured in terms of the number of such leaders it ultimately produces.

From the structural and organizational angle, we understand that the Federation is not perfect. As we gain experience from our cooperative efforts, we will undoubtedly improve not only the NFCCS program, but its organizational scheme and proceedings. I wish to stress the fact, however, that the NFCCS leaves a great deal to the students' own initiative. In that sense, one might say it has all the characteristics of an apostolate. Likewise, each member college has a vital role to play in the Federation. Just as the proverbial chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so the NFCCS will be as strong as its affiliated units. When each college student recognizes the possibility of rendering individual service and when each and every Catholic college senses the importance of working in unity and singleness of purpose, then we will have a genuine guarantee of unity. The NFCCS is the means to that end.

Sincerely and gratefully,

GERTRUDE KIRK, President

# A House On The Hill

G. R. SCHREIBER

*You have, of course, known the subtlety of fear. That remembered experience is sufficient to carry you into Mr. Schreiber's story and to give you the understanding you need. It matters little whether the hill is physical, or moral, or economic; we are all so often the climbers.*

## I

Outside it was twilight. Down in the valley, black as the inside of an ink bottle, the world looked up to the heavens where shone a blue lustrousness, still tinged with purple. That was all that remained of the sun—purple, as the mourning after death. But already a moon sat atop a huge brown barn, warm though far away.

Jim Harris saw all these things as he stood on a slight plateau some halfway up the steep side of Newcastle Hill. Down below him, it was dark with sudden night; above him, and that was where he looked the longest, another day was drawing up its skirts in flight. Still there was light, and towards that light Jim Harris looked.

"Some day," he always told Frank Rademacher who lived a mile down the valley from the Harris farm, "Some day I'm going to buy me a farm up there."

"I'm going to buy me a farm up there," he would say, "where you can see the daylight after four o'clock and watch the sun born before its rays show its face."

"There's freedom up there, Frank; freedom like me and you never know down here shut away from the world and the light. Me and you never know what it means to stretch an arm and not feel a hill pressing in against our fingers. And we never will if we stay here. I want to get up where I can breathe a fresh breath, where I can farm a furrow a mile long and never meet a hill. Didn't you ever want to get up there, Frank—up to Freedom?"

Old Frank Rademacher would sit there, nursing his long curved-stem pipe carefully, and drawing on it thoughtfully with that consideration born of years of contemplation. Frank was the typical valley farmer. So had his father been, and his father's father when the valley was an even darker place; when the steepness of the hillside was but a minor hardship compared to the wild beasts and the wilder Shawnee tribes.

"I used to kind of wonder how it would feel to live up there," Frank confessed. "But that's been a long time ago."



"Why don't me and you go up there together?" Jim questioned. "We could take our families and build close together. I've picked out a small knoll for my house, where you can look ten miles in any direction, where you can feel the wind, and see the sun, and . . . and . . . How about it, Frank, wouldn't you like to go?"

"No, Jim, I don't guess I'd want to go any more. I'm most too old to be moving around, and besides maybe I wouldn't like it, having lived here in this one place all my life."

"That's just the trouble with you," Jim said hurriedly. "You've lived here all your life. But you've got some more of that life to live. Why not live it up on the hill? You've never been out of here, Frank; you've *never* lived! But it's not too late; we could live up there together."

"Not for me, Jim," Frank said, and went back to sucking slowly on his briar. "You go on up there, and live on your hill, that's alright for you, but not for me; I'm getting too old. And someday, when you've built that house on the knoll, me and Louise will come up and visit you. And someday, maybe, when you want to die, you'll come back down to the valley where your father and your grandfather are, and you'll take your place beside them like you should. But for now, you go on up and build your house on the hill."

Jim knew it was useless to try to persuade Frank Rademacher to reconsider. For once Frank had his mind made up, there was little force this side of God to make him change. So he had made his way homeward, down the shadowy path, past a corn field where the stalks were just beginning to assume their tallness. From farther up the road came the slow easy tolling of a chapel bell, and mingled with it the soft lowing of a cow.

Around a bend in the path, Jim could see his cottage nestled in close under the breast of the hill. Light blue smoke, faint against the sky, curled and writhed as a river curls in darkened narrows. From the kitchen window poured a mellow, yellow haze.

To any other man the picture at the turn in the path would have been at least an inspiring sight, if not a consoling and comfortable one. But to Jim Harris, his mind bent on thoughts of the open land and the richness of it all, this scene only strengthened his desire to get away. He had resolved to himself that he would build a house on the hill.

## II

He put the question to Sarah that night and heard her doubt at first. Then, finally, she too agreed that they should move from the valley and go out to the plains. After awhile, Sarah even caught some of the spirit of Jim's planning, and she planned with him, dreamed with him when he dreamed of sweeping fields of bowing wheat, nodding in the molten glow of a late afternoon sun. And their hearts swelled in ecstasy over

the prospect of freedom from the drudgery of life in the narrow valley cell.

"Tomorrow, Sarah," Jim said. "Tomorrow we will climb the hill together and I'll show you where our house will stand. I'll show you where our barn will be and where the fields of corn and wheat will grow. Tomorrow, Sarah! tomorrow."

So they had gone in the morning. And before they knew it the sun spoke to them in that queer, silent way the sun has of speaking to those who will listen, and they knew that twilight was. And they stood there, on the knoll where Jim would build their house, and they were fascinated and awe-struck at the wildness of it all.

To the west, the brilliant scarlet felt cautiously into the softer purple, and its rays clung longingly to the sky as if reluctant to leave the field to night. They could see, as Jim had said, for ten miles to the north, and south, and east, and west.

"Jim."

"Yes, Sarah. What is it?"

The two of them were caught in the spirit of the scene unfolding, and their thoughts came only in short monosyllables as if they feared to lose the moment by speaking aloud.

"Jim, I feel almost afraid. I've never seen a sunset like this before. It's all so great and grand . . . and . . . I feel like the whistle of a redbird coming across the snow on a winter's noon. Listen, Jim, the chapel bell is ringing. But it's so far away. I hear only a shadow of the bell, Jim, and it makes me feel like a shadow—not like a human being with flesh and blood, but like a shadow that is and yet, somehow, can't be.

"I never knew it would be like this, Jim. I never knew an evening could be so grand and magnificent and yet so lonesome."

"Lonesome, Sarah?"

"Yes, Jim. Lonesome. Lonesome like a fly crawling across the head of a huge bass drum, fighting the wind, clinging low to the skin of the drum and being afraid. Listen to the bell, Jim. So far away, so small. I feel like that bell, Jim. I would always feel like it when I hear it ringing and know it is so strong yet hear it sound so weak.

"I didn't dream of lonesomeness, Jim, or of being afraid, when I dreamed of a house on the hill. I never thought of greatness or of smallness, except I knew the smallness to be too small. I never knew that greatness could be too great, or that its greatness could make a person smaller than the smallness of a place."

"What's the matter, Sarah; don't you like the location?" Jim turned with anxious eyes.

"It's not only the location, Jim. It's something much more than that—it's the atmosphere, the way a giant oak becomes a dwarf, that chapel bell once so strong and now so weak. Jim," Sarah ended suddenly, "I'm afraid."



"Sarah, don't be foolish. There's nothing here to be afraid of. It might be different were there shadows here, or places where a hidden danger might be lurking. There's nothing here but flat earth and sky."

His wife stood and listened, but Jim's words could do nothing to quiet the feeling she had. She clung to his arm and he could feel the coldness of her through the sunburn of his arm.

"Well," he said at last, "if that's the way you feel about it, you had better go back down to the cottage. Probably after we have our house standing here, and a tree or two around it, the place will seem different to you. I'm sure it will. You go on back down to the cottage."

"Aren't you coming down, too?" Sarah asked.

"Not right away, dear. You go on down and I'll be along in a minute. I want to do some more thinking and some more planning about this big farm of ours."

"Alright, Jim," she said, and was gone quickly to the path that led down the steep side of Newcastle Hill.

### III

After she was gone, Jim stood on the knoll. The sun had slipped even farther below the rim of the horizon. In the sky a violent confusion of colors ranged. That was to the west. From the east the greyness of a prairie twilight crept higher and higher. A lone bright star, resting for the moment atop a cedar tree, winked knowingly down at Jim Harris.

"I'm afraid . . . afraid." Those were her words.

They came to Jim now as he stood watching night come, and his mouth formed them slowly. "I'm afraid — afraid." He turned around to view the path down into the valley along which Sarah had made her way. He couldn't imagine what was wrong with her. From the way she had talked on the previous night, nothing would please her more than to take refuge from the dull existence in the valley. "Afraid."

The word kept presenting itself to Jim. He heard himself say it suddenly when he looked up and realized the sun was gone, when he felt a cool finger caress his cheek as the night breeze chased along. He heard himself say "Afraid," when he watched the prairie grasses dancing sinuously against the horizon. Their golden tops raked the scarlet where the sun had been and he found himself wondering if the tops would take fire. He spoke the word again. "Afraid."

Then he heard the chapel bell again. It *was* little and frail where once it had been strong and robust; it did sound as though . . .

Jim turned his back to the sun and began pacing off the steps where his house would stand. Now over here would be his barn. And up to the house from the barn would be a grape arbor with a flagstone path leading through. In the other direction, once more toward where the sun had been, would be the front porch. It would be a large affair, running all the way across the front and probably halfway around one side.

They could be at home here, he thought, and comfortable. All the rest of their lives they could be . . . Again the bell came tolling across the great openness. He stopped to listen. He had to stop for the bell was far, far away, and faint. He seemed to think the bell was calling him—it was so far away and plaintive.

All at once his mind refused to think of a farm where there would be daylight after four-thirty, where one could breathe a fresh breath, or plow a furrow a mile long, or where the chapel bell would be forever calling plaintively. His mind thought of "Afraid" — and while he thought, he felt the fear coming to him.

He looked to the west, where the glories of the setting sun had held him entranced and had furnished him with sentences he had never known himself capable of speaking. He looked to the east, to the north, to the south. Where once he saw things that were fascinating and desirable, he now saw them with irrepressible fear. For a while, because the wanting of the house was so strong in him, he tried to ignore the feeling. But it would not be ignored. It was persistent like the church bell wafted up from the valley.

"I'm afraid," he heard a voice saying. And he knew it was his own voice — not Sarah's.

"I'm not afraid of something I can see," he confessed to the wind and himself. "I'm afraid of all around me that is so vast, of a church bell that is faint. Sarah is right, we would never be happy here, we would be sailors forever stranded."

As he spoke to himself, Jim Harris realized more and more with each succeeding thought that he had never known what life on the vast plain would be like. He had never sensed the awesomeness of it. That which was golden rows of shining wheat and power and majesty to the prairie farmer was only fear and lonesomeness to this man from the valley. Down in the cottage at the turn of the bend, Sarah would be awaiting his return. She would be worrying about spending her life in a house on the hill.

So the man from the valley started slowly in the direction of the valley-path. And as he neared where it began its frantic descent, his pace quickened. He could hear the bell growing stronger now. So he stood on a slight plateau halfway up the side of Newcastle Hill, with dark below him, and the tinge of passing day above. And he looked longest above with the longing men have for something they have dreamed about, even when they realize that what they have dreamed for they do not want at all.

Then he started on again, and his step was firmer with the decision he had made. By and by he came to the valley floor and its shadows. But in its protection he felt secure and comfortable once more. He reached out experimentally and touched the side of the hill where it



sloped into the grass of the valley. The earth was warm in his hand and he fingered it gently.

On the way to his cottage he passed Frank Rademacher's farm. The old man sat on his porch puffing slowly at his curve-stem briar in much the same way as he had done last night, and the years before, and would do for the years to come.

He looked long at Jim through the faint light of a rising moon, and when he had recognized him he called out across the white rails of a picket fence.

"Going to build that house on the hill anyways soon, Jim?"

Jim hardly noticed that Frank had spoken to him so eager was he and intent on getting home to his cottage. His reply came back through the twilight to the man on the porch.

"Some people never know what living means until their time comes along to die. Others never think of dying until they're tired of living. Both kind are missing something, Frank; because I've found out that a cottage in the valley may be higher than the highest house on the hill."

It wasn't Frank Rademacher's way to wonder long over the queer things some of his neighbors said. Sometimes he only judged their thoughts from the sound of their voice, or maybe, the look on their face. But he knew Jim Harris had decided to live before dying. And from down the valley came the slow, easy tolling of a chapel bell, and mingled with it the soft lowing of a cow.

# Sargasso Sea

STEPHEN D. THEODOSIS

*Beyond the Pillars, this menace lay in the way of mariners; it was something strange and fearful, yet something for the gossip of fishwives and doddering old tars . . . Your geography, so rudely shaken in these days, will admit the addition of this item to your store of knowledge.*

In the very heart of the mighty Atlantic Ocean, midway between the Bahamas and the Azores, lies the great body of water known as the Sargasso Sea. To designate this part of the Atlantic as a "Sea" is at first glance something of a paradox, for no boundaries of any kind mark it off from the rest of the open ocean. The characteristics of this tract of water are so marked as to confer upon it its distinct individuality, hence the justification for the designation that it is a great body of water within a great body of water.

Its name, which is derived from the Portuguese word for seaweed, it owes to the prevalence of seaweed or gulfweed floating over its surface. Legend and myth have covered this area with islands of thickly matted seaweed many miles in extent, peopled it with strange monsters and made it what is obscurely known in the minds of millions of people as the 'graveyard of missing ships.' Even now it is not uncommon to find it stated in serious publications that in certain parts the Sargasso Sea is so thickly matted over with seaweed that vessels passing through are much retarded in their speed.

Not only is it differentiated from the Atlantic Ocean by the prevalence of gulfweed on its surface, but its waters likewise exhibit distinctive characteristics. The waters are relatively motionless. They have a deep blue color equivalent to the skies above them, which is accredited to the lack of a minute plant life called plankton, which when prevailing gives the water a deep green color. And coupled with this is a great transparency. Here a white disc about six feet in diameter was clearly seen with the naked eye when lowered two hundred feet below the surface. This remarkable property of diaphinity may be accredited to the depth which is altogether too deep for any storm waves to stir the sediments lying at the bottom. Also because of its distance from the coast, all sediments brought down by continental rivers are precipitated long before they can reach this region.

The region, due to a number of factors, has a high salinity. Situated at a considerable distance from any coast, there is no dilution by the less saline waters poured into the ocean by continental rivers. Nor is



such water brought into the region by any currents, for the circulation of the sea is about the Sargasso Sea, and not into it. Freedom from melting ice likewise removes a factor that tends to lower salinity. Moreover the region is one of relatively high temperature, favoring evaporation and therefore increased salinity of the water. This latter factor is further augmented by the relatively high percentage of sunny days.

Whether the Sargasso Sea was known prior to the discovery of America is still an open question. There appear to be grounds for believing that those remarkably hardy navigators of ancient times, the Phoenicians, were acquainted with it. Before the beginning of the Christian era there are references to the sea west of the Pillars of Hercules, certain parts of which are represented as being unnavigable because of seaweed. And there is record of the fact that a Portuguese sailor told Columbus prior to his eventful journey that one of the obstacles to be overcome in the westward voyage to India was the grasses.

It appears not at all improbable that some vague knowledge of this sea existed before 1492. To Columbus, however, must be accredited its discovery and the first authentic notice of the occurrence of gulfweed in this region. On his first voyage westward he encountered gulfweed for a number of days; and likewise on his return journey. In his log we find that the great navigator carefully recorded the occurrence of the gulfweed.

Viewed from the small vessels which Columbus and the other navigators of that time sailed across the Sargasso Sea to the New World, the patches of gulfweed undoubtedly looked vastly more formidable than they really were. This region is one of light winds; hence a sailing vessel here made slow progress. It is therefore little wonder that stories of widespread meadows of thickly matted gulfweed which seriously impeded the progress of vessels became current.

At present the gulfweed occurs in scattered masses up to one hundred feet in diameter, although patches covering an acre or even more have been seen occasionally. Sometimes under the action of the wind, long strips of gulfweed are formed which follow the direction of the wind. But it has been definitely proven that there are no islands of gulfweed miles in extent, and that it is nowhere to be found so dense as to interfere with the movements of a ship.

Seaweed exists so frequently here because of the warmth existing due to the warm equatorial current flowing westward plus a few other warm ocean currents. What is the origin of the seaweed found in the Sargasso Sea? How does it come there? This has been a matter of controversy from the very beginning. According to the latest theory, the gulfweed in the Sargasso Sea is destitute of the ordinary organs of reproduction. It does not come from the coast as was previously believed but lives and propagates vegetatively or by partition year after year. Some replenishment from coastal plants is conceded, but replenishment is regarded

as of very minor importance in the maintenance of the Sargasso Sea as a whole.

The gulfweed floats on the water supported by the small air sacks with which it is provided. This absence of roots is, therefore, another strong point in favor of the independent origin of the gulfweed in this particular region.

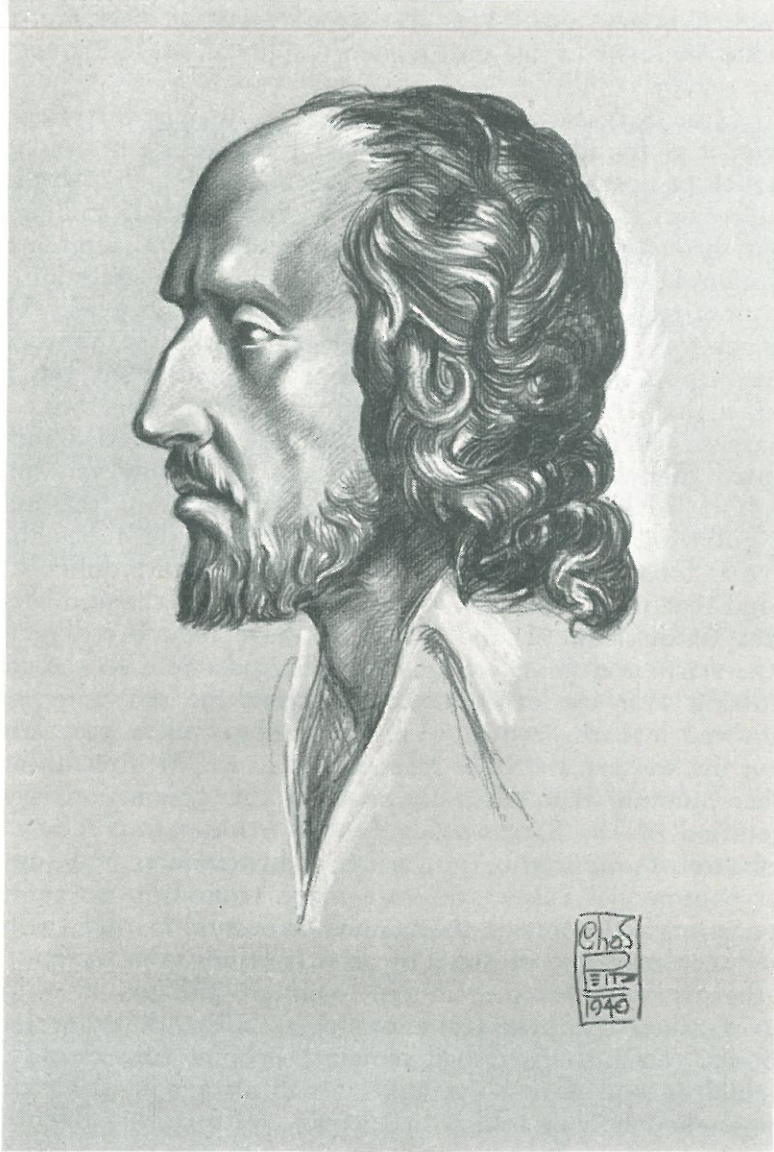
Defining the Sargasso Sea as the region in which gulfweed occurs frequently, it is found to delimit an area lying between the 20th and 40th parallels of north latitude and between the 35th and 75th meridians west of Greenwich. It covers an area two and one-half million square miles—but little less than the area of all of continental United States.

A Captain Dixon found himself interested in the question, "How large a quantity of gulfweed is there in the Sargasso Sea?" He then towed a net for a known distance and weighed the resultant catch of gulfweed. Upon several such experiments, he estimated the floating gulfweed in the Sargasso Sea to aggregate twenty million tons.

The Sargasso Sea is undoubtedly very old, due to the varied and special and adapted animal life which is found there. It is, however, singularly poor in bird life. This scarcity may be accredited to the masses of drifting gulfweed which afford a hiding place for the fishes and crabs that serve as food for birds, thus making capture more difficult. It has been found that the European eels, which occur in great numbers in the North Sea, Mediterranean, and the Baltic, have their breeding grounds within the warm and saline waters of the Sargasso Sea. In the course of the following year the larvæ disappear from the spawning grounds, having moved into the central Atlantic region; and a year later they appear on the western shores of Europe and in the Mediterranean.

Another question that naturally arises in this connection is whether the vegetation of the Sargasso Sea can be made commercially useful. The ashes are of importance in various industrial arts and suggestions for their commercial exploitation are made from time to time. It is, therefore, not wholly outside the bounds of possibility that the Sargasso Sea may furnish the raw material of an active industry. As it is, it shall remain the mystery that it is in the minds of millions of people who have never taken the pains to question its authenticity or locate its whereabouts. To authors it shall remain the home of treasurable plots and to children and grown-ups alike it will always be the focal point of a story, whether it be told by a scientist, historian or adventurer.





SHAKESPEARE



ROMEO AND JULIET



CHAUCEUR





HUGH OF LINCOLN



# Willa Cather: Lodestar

ROBERT LECHNER

*Clear vision is a requisite for the appreciation of the bright guidance given by Willa Cather. Mr. Lechner has that vision and by means of it plots a course amid the turmoil of modern American literature. Any light of such magnitude as that indicated here will merit the attention of all seekers of beauty.*

As one evaluates the multitude of works that have flowed from the pens of modern writers, Willa Cather's writings are as a fresh breeze blowing over the fetid swamps of materialism and godlessness. She has refused to allow herself to be influenced by the revolt against psychology, by the fadists who would treat man as a glorified animal buffeted around in an unfriendly world by an uncontrollable force outside themselves, wooden men on a chessboard moved by some unknown fate. She has ignored the Freudians who would plunge man into the irresponsible depths of the subconscious. The theory that man is not free but is hemmed in by social, and especially economic, conditions finds no place in her philosophy. She has dared to walk against a crowd that is rapidly increasing, not only in number but in popularity.

Willa Cather has created for us monumental figures of humanity. From the pages of her novels rise people with healthy and ardent souls, rational beings exercising their God-given faculties. We find men and women who are not determinists but triumph by their own will power; their environment does not engulf them but is subordinated to their ends. They are not defeatists for when their world which has been built so carefully, sanctified by blood and tears and years of living, falls shattered at their feet they find courage to live on and to rebuild it. "Her characters go forward on a wave of confident energy, as if human life had more dawns than sunsets in it."

And truly Willa Cather's novels carry predominately the message of hope. Especially in her early works, *O Pioneers*, *Song of the Lark*, and *My Antonia* is this trait noticeable. In these stories there is an affirmation of life in an open and fresh world. There are women enroute to their proper destinies at which they finally arrive. Every one of these women possesses strength and love of life. There is not enough misfortune in the world to stifle their hope and courage. They are people not born to dominate but to endure. Everything about them is affirmative—silhouetted against a background that is vitally real. As we watch each heroine weave her tapestry we are aware of a lyrical thread of nostalgia

which continues to the end and is strongly reminiscent of Augustine's dowry: "My heart is restless, O God, until it rests in Thee." These were the pioneers.

In her later works which represent a different period Willa Cather is too much the realist to present the same spirit which she realizes has succumbed to ease and money, which has been lulled to slumber by the tinkling cymbals of a mechanized and materialistic civilization. In *One of Ours*, *Professor's House*, and *Lucy Gayheart* we find people with a sense of unrest, maladjustment and frustration. For them, things are out of joint with life. Although we do not find Lucy Gayheart and Claude Wheeler to be superior individuals, masters of their own lives, as are Alexandra Bergson and Antonia Shimerda, neither are they disillusioned with a dark lurid view of the things of life. There is no dominant note of despair showing a thirst and quest for something which they do not know how to find as in the characters of such books as Lewis Bromfield's *The Rains Came* or Thomas Wolfe's *The Web and the Rock*. They are not blinded while crying and clamoring for something that is worthwhile in life. They retain their sense of values—their difficulties are the surmounting of obstacles which keep them from that which they know is worthwhile attaining—from their fulfillment of self.

There is yet another phase of her work, different from the two already mentioned. In *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, and *Shadows on the Rock* we find a spirit of tranquility in the souls of men. We find the rewards of hope and faith in a benevolent God. Archbishop Latour, Father Vaillant, Cecile Auclair and her father, all live in a pretty and placid world of their own despite the torrents that surround them. To what extent Willa Cather understands these people about whom she writes so well we may not know, but we do know that the full significance of their lives cannot be comprehended outside of religious experience. The lives of the two missionary priests are romanticized and at times the tale of Quebec is pure idealization but, nevertheless, the philosophy governing this tranquility is real, springing "from the dramatic past, with its wealth of opportunity for action and for victory. It denies the fruitfulness of contemporary life with its material pressures and its social conservatisms. And it finds repose in a tranquil culture, a life of unity and order, resting on authority and on an established mode of living and believing." It is not difficult to recognize in the souls of the people found in these two books that peace which is "the sirellity of the soul; tranquility of the mind; and simplicity of the heart, all joined by their inseparable companion, Charity."

Universality is Willa Cather's greatest quality. She treats of those aspects of man which are universal and true. She seeks that which is for all time and sets out to "defeat our custom-made prejudices, our sneaking moralities, our cowardices and our modern life, adulterated,



sterilized, with the sting taken out." Her prairie stories are "primitive and epic." They represent man's eternal struggle against the elements, the emergence of culture and civilization: In Alexandra Bergson and Antonia Shimerda we can see all men who have toiled on the frontiers so that future generations might reap the fruit of their efforts. In Professor St. Peters we behold all men discovering that worldly success is "a handful of ashes and a mouthful of mold." In *A Lost Lady* we see in Marian Forrester every human soul leaping upward seeking "some ever-blooming, ever-burning, ever-piercing joy." Willa Cather is a human and solid writer and every story she tells is a story of human growth. She is concerned with realities of the soul and in our age this is a heroic quality.

It was in her immigrant neighbors of childhood days that Miss Cather discovered those qualities which make all men fundamentally the same, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Bohemians—all thrilled to the sweep of the prairie, to the bright windy mornings. All found the same courage to remain through the frozen silences of the long winters. Their spirits fused to do battle against their common enemy—the frontier. Out of these hardships and sufferings of the frontier life arose that spirit which reduces all men to a common denominator. It is the passing of this same spirit that is lamented so loudly in many of Cather's books. She regrets the passing away of romance and adventure from the West; liquidation of a pioneer era, decay of frontier spirit into a weedy materialism of the machine age. She regrets the wasting away of something fine and rare under the paltry motive and short cuts to pleasure that ignore the sovereign worth of character and individual discipline." She has recognized that in her pioneers, "tragedy edged their dreams, and epics slept in their lives, waiting for the kiss of art to awaken them."

However, Willa Cather's fame lives not alone in the selection of her material and the spirit she has infused into it. She is an artisan in the best sense of the word—a maker. "Her significance lies much more in the artistry of her method than in her material." Henry James, the perfectionist of form, early influenced Willa Cather as she herself states, speaking of her years spent at the University of Nebraska: "In those days no one seemed so wonderful as Henry James." Despite the outstanding place style takes in all her works, never does it run away with the story. It is forever subordinated and adapted to the idea and spirit to be portrayed. "To Cather it (style) remains only an implement for conveying sense and significance. In her opinion it should be kept as clear and sharp as a crystal in order that the author's meaning may shine through." Her disciplined and almost austere style becomes the delicate thread which fuses beauty and wisdom and which weaves through the characters of her pioneers and artists a serenity and tenderness that is delicate and rare. It becomes the means to impose a form and design upon life which colors and accents an artist's work. Through her style



she "fuses soul and body into one cosmic importance . . . identifies the general and specific . . . lends spiritual implications." This medium of restraint reduces her novels to essentials. They are not filled with long sterile passages nor is each event embroidered with a multitude of words. In *My Antonia* the heroine, Antonia has fallen in love with a cheap seducer and is abandoned on what she thought would be her honeymoon. The whole incident is introduced and dismissed in one short sentence: "I'm not married, Mrs. Steavens, and I ought to be." Here is artistry sublime. Here is Miss Cather at her best, realizing and proving that "real art is concerned not with botany but with flowers, not with root causes but with ultimate values, not with sex but with love, not with human nature but with human beings."

Not all of Willa Cather's novels are of equal value. There is by no means a consensus among critics as to what order they are to be listed with reference to their excellence but all admit wide degrees of difference. Some of her works snap at a given point and fail to maintain their sustained power. In the first part of *My Antonia* we share Antonia's pioneer existence, her joys and pains and learn to know the girl that is Antonia. But when half of the book is finished we lose her in a group of small town girls and wait until the last chapter to again find her in all her grandeur. In the same manner do we lose Alexandra Bergson of *O Pioneers*. In *The Song of the Lark* we struggle with Thea Kronborg through poverty and adversity only to find that we have lost her during the interlude we spent deep in an enchanted canyon in New Mexico. After that we are given only glimpses of the real Thea. In *Lucy Gayheart* and *One of Ours*, catastrophe is used to dispose of characters in a manner that is not too artistic. To be artistic tragedy must be inevitable. The drowning of the married Sebastian who had become Lucy's whole life in *Lucy Gayheart* smacks too much of convenience to be artistic. Death on the battlefield seems too easy a way to solve the disillusion of Claude Wheeler in *One of Ours*. This is a God-seeking novel but it is easier to construct a glorious death than answer the questions raised. Especially in works dealing with more modern times there is a revolt against the moral and spiritual qualities of American life but no answers—no conclusions. Willa Cather has lived too long with her simple, ardent, achieving pioneers to comprehend a world filled "with so much pleasure and so little joy; so much learning and so little wisdom; so much effort and so little fruition; so many philosophies and so little philosophy; so many seers and so little foresight; so many teachers and such an infinite vortex of doubt." She has walked into the vestibule of the Church to ask her questions. "Willa Cather is the representative in American Literature of that neo-Catholic movement which bears a witness to a continuity of power in the Church." Not until she proceeds into the baptism will she find the answers to her queries.

But "Willa Cather has never published a bad book." Through all of

them is spirit infusing matter—that it is not spread with equal intensity in all parts is not too important. There is always that flame of hope kindled by the contact of spirit with spirit—that flame which has found eternal fuel in three hours agony on Calvary. Her stories are “simple recitals of human toil crowned with tranquil happiness.” Here we have the fundamental doctrine of all human-kind which was set down in the first chapter of Genesis: work and in the end happiness. Here is set a goal not of material wealth but of self-fulfillment.

As we reflect upon Willa Cather’s sagas, the pioneers’ life appears as a prairie road with treacherous curves and long, dull, dull stretches. But there is always the top of the hill where in the fulness of sunlight we can stand by and behold, “virgin soil spread to the light compliant. Winds blow over it. Storms beat lashing into it. Flowers spring out of it. Rains fall from the highest court of cloud and work it to a masterpiece . . . Unblemished steel of knighthood gleam in the sun . . . Spotless humanness spring to devastated world and hold itself unblemished. Strong will submerged to Will. A soul lifted pure above black clouds.”

# The Story Of Jeff Downey

JOHN FORD

*The similarity of theme of this story with that of another in this issue illustrates well the principle of originality of approach in all good fiction. Disillusion levels many characters in the world of literature and so makes them close to us. We suggest that you meet Jeff Downey.*

As the now almost deserted highway fell prey to the whirling wheels of the car, gray thunderheads shaded the scarlet sky and the day's blood ebbed slowly beyond the horizon.

Jeff Downey, the lone occupant of the car, a tall, lanky, fair-complexioned youth, had cast his first vote only a few months previous. He had not been out of college long, for even though his parents weren't affluent, he had, through sacrifice been given a college education and for some reason had never been expected to do any hard work. He had lived in Meadowfield, Georgia. Now he was on his way to a northern city, where he had been promised a position that would afford him ample opportunity to emancipate the ambition every youth seems to have. It was a position Jeff wanted badly, for it meant, he felt, a chance to gain all the things he had always desired: wealth, social position, prestige.

His hands rested firmly on the wheel of the auto as intermittently his thought went back to the previous night. Thoughts that irritated him, but thoughts from which he could not escape.

He remembered too well his venerable mother and her gentle sobs as he put his arm around her and promised "to write often"; he recalled the warm handclasp his aging father had given him as a tear dropped off his wrinkled cheek. Jeff's face was stern as he recalled another scene and another love.

Ann had said goodbye with tear-filled eyes and a promise to wait for Jeff until he could send for her in a few years. They had planned a family, a home, a beautiful future. Now those plans were put aside. They were not abolished, for Jeff would send for her. He promised . . . Those promises kept stabbing his mind. He loved her and hated to leave her, but—

The youth tried to reform his thoughts by recalling his new job, but that only brought to mind the position his father had offered him trying to induce him to stay at home. Thus Jeff Downey's thoughts as one word kept intoxicating his mind—success. It bit deep in his being and nourished the ambition that swelled in his bosom.



Suddenly a loud report and a swerve of the car announced a blowout to the driver, who with a struggle brought the car to a stop. With rather furious determination the occupant leaped from the car and looked at a flat rear tire.

Change a tire here?

The lanky youth glanced despondently about him. Up the road a crude sign which read, "Garage," hung precariously from a board nailed to the roof of a shack. Briskly he walked toward it.

A knock on the door, that was without knob and seemed to have been made for a very different purpose than that for which it was being used, brought a cry of "just a minute" from within the shanty.

The door opened and a head stuck out. A grimy face gave sternness to the demand, "What yuh want?"

After a brief explanation the unfortunate traveler enlisted the aid of the individual who professed to be a mechanic of high rank.

"The job'll take 'bout half n'hour. Want to come in and set down?" questioned the craftsman.

Jeff replied with a shake of his head, "No, I'll take a little walk."

The sky was turning to a purple hue as the aspiring young man sauntered up the lonely road, viewing the surrounding country, whose fertility was betrayed by the lushness of the June landscape.

Suddenly, Jeff noticed a house that surmounted a small knoll at the bend of the road; he moved toward it viewing it with amazement.

A gravel drive, over which pigweed sprawled profusely, wound gently up to the house that was on top of a hill which sloped sharply to the highway. The house itself was of southern style; and though in decay, the tall columns that supported the front gave to it the dignity that all southern mansions have. A more scrutinizing examination made Jeff's breath almost catch in his throat. On one side of the house a dense clump of evergreens lent an air of morbidity to the place that was obviously deserted. Within this cluster was what appeared to be a mausoleum. The sepulchre, gray in the twilight, reflected all the coldness of death and caused the witness to shudder as he gazed upon the awful scene.

Approaching footsteps caused the sightseer to turn and confront a rather stockily built rustic walking up the highway. His clothes gave evidence that he had been working in the field, and his hoary head emphasized his features and complexion that was bronzed by the elements.

"Howdy," the stranger greeted Jeff with a broad smile.

"How do you do, sir," answered the traveler, as with a sweep of his arm, he looked back on the scene he had come upon and added, "I was just looking at that house. I find it rather strange to see such in this part of the country. It is so precise in every detail with a Southern estate." Then with a grimace, "The surroundings and the tomb, if that is what it is would indeed remind one of a haunted house."

The stranger's brow wrinkled, as with half-closed eyes he gazed up at the forsaken abode.

"It wuz a strange house, indeed," he began. Lots a folks 'round here believed it wuz haunted for a long time. Some still do."

"What do you mean?" inquired Jeff.

"Well, as for me, son, I don't think it wuz the house that was haunted so much as it wuz the man that lived there."

"I'm afraid I don't understand," said the puzzled youth.

"Well, this here house," continued the old man, belonged to a fellow by the name of Alden, James Alden. I don't rightly know who it belongs to now. I reckon no one, 'cause nobody ever claimed it since the owner died over five years ago."

"What happened?" asked Jeff.

"You see, son, Jim Alden came to these parts when he wuz nothin' but a youngster, like yourself. He wuz a lawyer, and mind you, a mighty good one. He worked in the city 'bout twenty miles from here, but always stayed 'round in this neighborhood."

"Where was he from?" interrupted Jeff.

"None of the folks 'round here knew where he wuz from 'cept from what his voice told them. He had sort of a Southern accent."

"Go ahead," begged the youth.

"Well, for a couple a years he kept talkin' 'bout a girl back home. Nobody ever took him serious in the matter. Then one day he started havin' this house built. Folks thought he wuz a little teched, buildin' a Southern estate 'round in these parts."

"He must have gotten ahead as a lawyer," said Jeff.

"He did," responded the aged worker. "He got one promotion right after 'nother. He had quite a name in the city."

"Well, as I wuz sayin', he kept talkin' of this girl. Then lo and behold, one day he brought a young lady into the county seat and introduced her as his wife, and said this was the girl he had been talkin' of. Well, I've never seen a more happy couple. I wuz young at the time myself and it made me sorta warm inside just to see folks so happy. But then it happened."

"What?"

"They hadn't been man n' wife more than six months when the girl started ailin'. No time at all passed 'fore she wuz a corpse. Jim Alden wuz heartbroken. No one could console him. The girl wuz buried when he started buildin' that tomb. When it was finished he took her outa her grave and put her in it, sayin' he wanted her close to him."

"What happened to him?" asked Jeff.

"After that he began to act sorta queer like. He would sit for hours mumblin' to himself, right there on the porch lookin' at the tomb. Kept repeatin' somethin' like, 'If I only wouldn't a left her.' Then in a rage he would curse money and his own house. His own house that he had

built, mind you. Many nights he wuz seen goin' to the tomb with a lantern, and that wuz when stories of a haunted house began goin' 'round.

"But as I said before, son, it wuz the man himself that wuz haunted. He lived a miserable life, without friends, until he died a while back."

"That is about all there is to say 'bout the house," said the old man, with a shrug of his shoulders.

Jeff Downey rubbed his eyes to clear a mist that gathered over them. With a sigh he bid his new acquaintance, whose name he did not even know, "goodbye."

Deliberately and swiftly he walked back to the garage, where he found his car waiting. He paid the mechanic and with fierce determination stepped on the starter. The garageman's cry, "Hey, mister!" was lost under the roar of the motor. He stood there scratching his wagging head as he watched the car disappear down the road.

"The darned fool is all turned around," he exclaimed. "He's goin' back the way he came."

In the distance the pur of a motor grew fainter. Night's stillness settled over the countryside.



# Aristotle, The Biologist

JACK PATTON

*Someone has claimed that a scholar must be something of an antiquarian. That is true, but whether that demand applies equally to the scientist may be a matter of dispute. Nevertheless, Mr. Patton demonstrates clearly how much fun there is in checking up on the scientific theories of one of the old boys. Furthermore: perhaps we are not quite as good as we think we are.*

Aristotle is primarily one of the world's greatest philosophers. As a result of his philosophy he is known to us for many other things. He is the founder of formal logic in which he systematically considers the laws of thought in the relation to acquisition of knowledge. As a metaphysician he was concerned solely with reality, in being as being. Naturally, as he was a metaphysician he was also a cosmologist, treating the character of the universe as an orderly system. As a psychologist he was concerned with showing the body as a substance consisting of a material body and a spiritual soul. He was concerned with physics in so far as it participates in moving objects; mathematics interested him in regards to immovable objects. His practical philosophy included ethics and politics. Ethics interested him in showing that happiness is determined by the end or purpose of one's existence. Politics concerned him in showing the best form of government is that which best suits the character of its people. Aristotle also analyzed beauty and evolved a theory of art. He believed that art consisted in the realization in external form of the true idea.

Then too, Aristotle was a biologist. To us, Aristotle has become known at "The Father of Biological Sciences." He was one of the first men to classify animals, one of the first to study the form of animals, the world's first evolutionist and embryologist.

In regards to the classification of animals, Aristotle made a most important contribution in that he analyzed animals from several different points of view. According to Aristotle, "Animals may be characterized according to their bodily parts." Now one can easily see the value of such a system when he considers that it is in use today. In order that one may classify the more complex animals, Aristotle suggested doing so on a basis of the parts of the animals' bodies, both internal and external: such as the organs of locomotion, respiration, sense, and blood circulation.

Aristotle's system of classification was never summarized by him; others in the reading of his works have extracted it. Each man who has

ever done this has reproduced Aristotle's theories in a different manner. This failure of Aristotle to set forth the principles of his system in an organized body does in many ways detract from the pioneer importance of his system.

From Aristotle's writing one can easily realize his vast knowledge of animal form, which he used to build up his system of classification. In his writings Aristotle has recognized over 520 species of animal life. These species belonged solely to Greece and its surrounding sea. This number of species is approximately one-fourth of the animals recognized today. In other words, man in twenty-four centuries with the aid of microscopes and other modern techniques, has searched the entire world and has only been able to increase Aristotle's number of animals fourfold.

Many of the animals Aristotle described, he knew only from the descriptions of others. He describes the crocodile as having its upper jaw jointed on its lower jaw. Now certainly if he had examined the crocodile he would not have made this mistake, because in actuality it is not jointed to the lower jaw. He also says the lion has no cervical vertebra. Any one who has ever dissected a lion knows this to be erroneous. The lion's bones he describes as being so hard that they give off sparks, like flint, when they are struck. It is also said they contain no marrow. How much Aristotle actually borrowed from the works of his predecessors we can not actually tell because those writings are not in existence today.

In reality only the outward form of animals and their existence interested Aristotle. He was particularly interested in marine life. The migration of birds and the causes of this migration were always great puzzles to him. Much speculation as to why this phenomenon occurred resulted from this.

Aristotle did not slight biology from an anatomical point. Again Aristotle borrowed much from the works of others. The true value of his anatomical studies lies in the fact that he, for the first time, considered anatomy from a comparative view point, as is the case today. This is that he examined a great number of animals and saw where they were similar and dissimilar. This occurs for the simple reason that it is often impossible to dissect a particular animal. Therefore that animal's anatomy can be learned only through a comparative study of similar animals.

Aristotle writes that his anatomical conclusions are based upon the dissection of animals. In his ideas we find many things contrary to our now popular ideas. The heart to him was the organ of the soul and intelligence, while the brain produced mucous and cooled the blood.

Other ideas contrary to ours are in his description of the nervous system. He describes it as being 'cold,' the spinal marrow 'hot,' and the nerves and tendons as confused. In the eye he believed the moisture, contained within the eye, received the visual impressions.

I enjoyed particularly his description of the physiology of digestion. His ideas are very vague and erroneous simply because the science of



chemistry did not exist then. 'Cooking' plays the important part in his theory of digestion, this 'cooking' being done in the intestinal tract.

Aristotle, from his study, formulated a theory of evolution. His ideas are not altogether too far from our modern ideas. Through Aristotle's metaphysical speculation he saw a constant evolution from lower to higher forms of being. Even today this theory stimulates much discussion.

In the field of embryology, Aristotle did the work for which he is best remembered. To the student of embryology, Aristotle is known as the "Father of Embryology." Aristotle delved into the field of embryology quite naturally. In accordance with his speculation in regards to evolution, he studied the development of animals from the egg to the perfect state, following the development of the chick from day to day. He discovered many astonishing facts which were recorded in the world's first book on embryology. This book was so far in advance of his age that only recently have men outdistanced him.

Today the laboratory study of embryology is carried out in much the same way as Aristotle studied it. This is by the study of the chick from day to day, and from hour to hour. In regards to Aristotle's work with the chick, he is to be best remembered for his theories on the development of the heart and blood.

On the reproduction of animals Aristotle also did much studying. Aristotle separated reproduction into three classes: sexual, asexual, and spontaneous generation.

According to Aristotle, sexual reproduction is caused by the male and the female of a species. To Aristotle the man was the 'complete, warmer' element which gave the embryo motion and activity. The female was the 'colder, incomplete' element which gave the embryo its potential form.

Asexual reproduction, Aristotle recognized in lower animals, as well as in plants. To him, as it is to us, it was that form of reproduction that occurs from the budding or the development of the seed of a plant.

Spontaneous generation was Aristotle's great downfall. He held that life could be produced from out of putrefying substances. This was supposed to happen in the lower forms of animals, such as flies, beetles, and grasshoppers. For centuries the world believed this to be true. It was not until Pasteur proved in a classic experiment that such a form of reproduction did not exist that the world recognized its mistake.

From this material one can gather the consummate excellence of Aristotle's work, in spite of certain obvious weaknesses. These weaknesses are to be found where he had to speculate. It must be remembered that in Aristotle's day the science of chemistry did not exist. He also did not possess the microscopes or other modern equipment which biologists have today. Aristotle must be primarily remembered for his pioneering.

To really appreciate Aristotle we must go back in our imagination to



his time. Perhaps then we can realize the breadth of the mind that could accomplish such a vast amount of original work so as to entitle him to be considered the founder of formal logic, the author of the first treatise on scientific psychology, the first natural historian, and the father of the biological science.

## A Wish

Where pebbled shore  
is kissed by dancing river,  
where sun warms shadow  
and plays with shadow's children:  
    There to be.

Where twilight's cloak  
spreads, enfolding soft,  
a breath of mother-love,  
a slow caress, and silence:  
    There to be.

G. R. SCHREIBER

# Pictorial Composition

CHARLES J. PEITZ, JR.

*The pattern of a thing is very often a clue to the understanding of the thing itself. Mr. Peitz, laying aside his use of charcoal and pencil for a moment, tells us here how the design of things artistic can help us to appreciate more easily beauty itself. The editors feel that you have been looking for just this approach, so they gratefully include it for your interested search.*

To the average man in the street, the art of painting is one shrouded in mystery, impossible to understand or appreciate without an extensive training in all the intricacies of technique and composition. It is generally thought, even by many artists, that no one, unless endowed with a thorough and comprehensive art education can ever be a good critic; that only the artist, or at least some one directly connected with painting has the right to decide whether this painting or that is either good or bad.

This idea seems to pervade all the arts, and although to a great degree fallacious, is not without some foundation. It obviously springs from the more or less universal axiom that only those who are running a business, or at least connected with it in some way, are in a position to discuss it authoritatively. It is patently asinine for a man to attempt to discuss something about which he knows nothing and with which he has had no experience. The difficulty, however, is that this axiom, like many others, is too often applied to art in the same way it is applied to all other forms of mental or physical activity; whereas art, particularly fine art, is like no other of these activities. It has its own separate and distinct realm, and consequently cannot be considered in the same light or with the same approach that applies to these other activities.

Considered from the active aspect, art is simply the product of something which is inherent in every man, the product of that which makes him a man, namely his intelligence. It is a product of the creative instinct, that spark of the divine in man by which he is made to the image and likeness of his Creator. Now since all men are endowed with this quality, for if they were not they wouldn't be men, it is not illogical to say that every man, either potentially or actively, is an artist of some kind or other. He has the ability and the desire and all the qualities necessary to create something, not in a primary sense, it is true, but certainly in a secondary sense.

In like manner, from a passive point of view, art appeals to the cogni-



tive faculties of man, to certain senses of unity and variety and proportion and coherence which are inherent in all men and are merely the outgrowth of their intelligence. Now while it is true that these faculties can be trained and developed much as muscle can be developed, and that, like muscle, they grow weak if subject to disuse, it is equally true that they will not and cannot be destroyed altogether. It is only when disease afflicts them, in this case a mental disease, that they become entirely inactive.

Insofar as the fine arts are concerned, we may say that they are merely the cognitive and creative faculties of men developed to an exaggerated degree. The artist is an artist because his creative instinct is overdeveloped and directed in all its entirety toward a certain type of creative activity; the critic is a critic because his senses of unity and variety and proportion are refined to an unusual extent. Of course, these faculties are merely the outgrowth of the intelligence, which together with the imagination and emotions is the ultimate foundation for all art. They should never be conceived as something above and apart from the other faculties of man, as something superadded to the whole man; just as talent in some particular field should never be considered a special gift added to the other faculties which make this particular man a man, but rather as a more developed part of the basic and integral parts which all men possess in common by which they are constituted as belonging to the race of men.

It is for this reason, namely that man appreciates or creates art because his essential notes are those of man, that the presentation of art has for a basis all those things which man as a rational animal knows to have some particular significance to his external existence. Since man can know only that which comes to him through the senses, it is by the appeal and in relation to sense experience that the artist must attempt to reach the intellect and cognitive faculties.

In painting, the technical method for making this appeal is that known as composition, or the arrangement of the integral parts of the picture into some coherent and pleasing pattern. It may be defined fundamentally as the art of organization, of weaving into a single pattern all those elements which go to make up the picture, thus making it as pleasing and alive to the observer as possible. It is based upon certain rules or norms which have been established, not by any arbitrary action on the part of artists and teachers, but by the fundamental ideas of all men in regard to their aspect of their surroundings.

Now the devices used in pictorial composition necessarily must be in accord with man's conception of the material phenomena with which he is continually surrounded, for, as we have said above, the artist's approach must be made in relation to man's sense experiences. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the use of a few examples.

The horizontal line has played an extremely important part in the art of composition for it is most conducive to a suggestion of rest and

peace of all linear formations. Practically all things when in repose assume this position. When we sleep, we stretch out horizontally; when the sea is quiet, the horizon line is smooth and unbroken. And it is for this reason that the horizontal line is so prevalent in pictures conveying an impression of peace and repose.

But on the other hand, if effect of violent action is desired, the use of lines running counter to each other, or to be more explicit, oppositional, is best suited to obtain the desired effect. A line similar to that formed by a bolt of lightning when it strikes gives a feeling of violence or strife. It conveys the impression of vigorous action, of turmoil and clash.

Diagonal lines likewise exert a potential influence in this regard. They too suggest movement and action. If placed right, they have the tendency to throw the whole composition into commotion. They suggest that which darts off at a tangent, that which is not in keeping with the normal order.

But so much for the use of lines and their influence in the art of pictorial composition. There are many other linear formations which can be used to convey still other effects, but their study is too extensive and complex to be treated here. Suffice it to say that the importance of the line cannot be overestimated, for it is the foundation upon which rests the whole structure of composition.

Now let us turn our attention to the various types of patterns formed by lines and their influence on the spirit of the picture. The triangle is the best example, being that most often found in natural phenomenon.

The isosceles triangle is probably the most suggestive of structural stability of all geometric forms for the very simple reason that it is indicative of a mountain, one of the most substantial of all natural formations. The broad base tapering upward toward the point gives an effect of something in immovable and massive solidity. Now when the basis for the composition of a picture is this type of triangle, we have this same effect of structural stability. For this reason the traditional Madonna and Child theme is based upon this pattern, for it brings to the mind of the spectator the suggestion of the indestructibility of the love between mother and child.

Another basic geometric form used in composition and equally if not more effective in depicting the relationship between mother and child is the circle. It symbolizes perfection for the very obvious reason that it is itself perfect. Its circumference has no beginning and no end, and at every point is equidistant from the center. Consequently, when we arrange mother and child to conform to this form we emphasize the perfection of the love existing between the Virgin and her Divine Child.

But now let us turn our attention to an idea very different from that of perfection or stability, an idea very often the guiding theme in some of the world's masterpieces which deal with the vicissitudes of human nature, of weakness and vacillation, and dependence upon some other



stronger and more indomitable force. Since man is not perfect he is dependent not only upon his Creator but also upon his environment and the forces of nature and his fellow men. He is by nature weak, unable many times to prevent disaster to himself and loved ones. No man can be called completely self reliant and independent of his surroundings. There has probably never been an entirely self made man in the history of the world. Now to express this weakness in graphic form we must find some pattern symbolic of weakness, and easily recognized as such by all men because of their own personal experiences in life.

A vertical line, bent as if yielding to some pressure brought against it, very much like a blade of grass swaying to the changes of the wind, will convey such an effect. Or an inverted triangle, with the center of interest placed at the pointed base, will give the same effect, very often even more so, for the tendency is for that center of interest to look oppressed by the other figures which form the sides of the triangle. The subject looks crowded in, overpowered by the vaster forces which hover above it, and entirely subservient to them.

But on the other hand, when a soaring, spiritual feeling is desired, the straight and unbending vertical line is good, for it gives the impression of climbing upward to unknown heights. This is admirably demonstrated by the soaring qualities of the Gothic cathedrals, with their immense pillars and mounting spires. A spiritual atmosphere is attained. Incidentally, this same principle can be used in drawing the human figure. If we construct it in more lengthy proportions than exist in reality, it acquires a more idealized and distinguished look. It looks more classical, more stately. This is the device very often used by the famous El Greco to gain the spiritual effects for which he is so well known.

Now, if on the other hand, we wish to get the powerful and dynamic aspects achieved by Michelangelo, we must not only emphasize height but massiveness as well. Each figure must be constructed in Herculean proportions, but still posed in such a way as to emphasize grace and ease, for a combination of these two qualities best convey an impression of an indomitable and moving force against which the puny forces of average men are completely powerless. What the figure must have besides massiveness is action, for without it, any figure no matter how vast or awe inspiring, is completely devoid of the aspect of power. Only those things are powerful which can move, which can exert their power in the right places and with the most telling effects.

But enough of the specific details in pictorial composition. They are much more varied than it is possible to describe here. The important thing to remember is that they are all based, no matter in what way they affect the finished picture, on certain ideas which all men have in regard to their natural surroundings. Now let us turn to more general

aspects of composition, to those general headings under which all the above details fall in one way or another.

To practically all students of aesthetics the most fundamental and necessary property of every good picture is that of unity. This conclusion is arrived at by simply applying the self evident principle of contradiction, for all parts of that which is presented as a whole must be parts of that whole, and not in themselves separate and individual entities having nothing to do with the whole. Therefore, when part of a picture is in no way connected with the picture, we have a contradiction, an untruth so to speak, which is displeasing to the observer because of his natural desire for order and integrity.

Another attribute necessary to the finished product is that of harmony, for without it we have only chaos. Harmony is in reality an outgrowth of the quality unity, and is necessary for the same reasons. It is connected with still another quality, proportion, which is equally necessary, for that which is not in proper proportion tends toward the unrecognizable. Bad proportion is the result of undue emphasis of some parts and too little emphasis of others, thus leaving an unclear and distorted impression. And in keeping with the principle of proportion, we must recognize the quality of restraint, which simply means the lack of anything which has no contribution to the unified idea of the picture.

The above attributes are those which appeal to the intellect, and in this may be said to be related to each other. But the appeal of art cannot be said to be only to the intellect, for even though this is the ultimate foundation for all creative and cognitive activity, we must acknowledge a physical aspect, since art is the product of a physical being. This physical aspect is easily found in the appeal of all art to the emotions, the concept of which obviously embraces a whole series of psychological factors, and which has its dependence on the fact that man is a physical being. It only follows therefore that there must be some attributes which of their essence must appeal to this physical side of man's nature. These have been found to be three in number, balance, rhythm, and variety.

The basic principle underlying all three, balance, rhythm, and variety, is that the material universe, and consequently all those things which have to do with man's sense experience are in a state of constant change, which is nevertheless of a uniformity, or to use a better word, of a certain orderliness, and balance, so as to reflect the guiding spirit of a Supreme Intelligence. Thus we immediately see the basis for all three of the above norms. If our work of art has not balance, it is displeasing in relation to all those material phenomena which we see about us; if it has not variety, it is displeasing for in a world of change constant repetition is tiresome since it is contrary to our physical desire for a systematic and guiding repetition which will stabilize the uniformity of the whole work.

These seven attributes then, we may consider as those general qualities



necessary to every good picture. The worth of a picture is diminished in direct proportion to the degree in which they are lacking. It can be easily seen that they are all based upon certain fundamental principles in the nature of man. Therein lies the secret of art, their lies its appeal; its force in affecting the human soul. It is not an abstruse and difficult field to be entered only by those with the so-called "artistic outlook." It can be appreciated and loved by every man and should be for the simple reason that he is a man endowed with an intelligence. It is only because of the complexities of our educational environment that we very often dismiss the subject of art as one capable of being understood only by those people designated "artistic," and not by the average man. Yet it is only by his being an average man that one can appreciate art, for it is to the essential notes of the average man that art appeals. The entire difficulty is found in man's refusal to permit his intellectual faculties to develop normally and as they were intended to be developed. Their development has been retarded because man has the tendency to turn toward the easiest way, because he is by nature lazy and disinclined to work. He attempts to find happiness and the fulfillment of all his desires in material accomplishment and material pleasures, with the result that only too often his mental abilities never reach that completeness of which they are capable.



# Thought Points At You

RICHARD SCHEIBER

*You will find this hearty appeal to your intelligence most worthy of the pen of a Senior. Mr. Scheiber has thought it all out, and if he does not convince you to partake of the same glorious adventure, these editors will be much surprised. We offer as proof our amended will.*

We approach the subject rather warily, like a fencer who would prefer to pink his opponent with a rapier thrust instead of a clublike blow with the flat side of his sword. For the idea of thought, when sprung upon you at first glance, is like an impregnable something or other with which the average man in the street doesn't think himself concerned. Possibly because of this, thought the world over isn't enjoying the best time. Nor is it patronized as readily by students in this country as those abroad.

Now the above isn't pure figment of the imagination, this comparison of students, we mean. In England until the bombing of London began, there was published a modest but solid-founded Catholic review called *Integration*, at the University of Cambridge. The fact that it was student-initiated and propelled makes it an odd sort of parallel of the ribald college humor magazines in this country. Its main claim to fame rested in the serious treatment of such topics as "Liberalism," "Poverty," "Bank Clerking," and "Marriage," all developed, rather ponderously and philosophically perhaps, with a stress on the Catholic approach.

By comparison, the Cambridge youth is head and shoulders above his counterpart in this country, in a mental way, that is. A number of factors explain this, first of which is probably his studious environment. For instance, it would make an American student blush to hear of the length of the European university day, and how the general academic atmosphere before the War was so far and away from our own athletic-conscious schools. So long as the Pumas look like a sure shot for higher basketball laurels, you won't provoke a lot of campus arguments about our student-duty of bringing the Catholic culture of the pre-machine age up to date. This is probably true, but there is no surer way to clear up our mental stream—if it is a trifle polluted—than through the avenue of clearer thinking. After the quaint manner of the Cambridge scholars, "Thought is paramount in the moulding of society." A brief estimate of the current world scene will bear that out.

No plainer evidence can there be of what has happened to thought than the example of the arts. Consider the cinema, for example. Fine,

dramatically correct movies are being shunted into oblivion in favor of too many fluffy, song-and-dance productions. When such a drama as "The Long Voyage Home" plays the local theatre, the box office starves, with the result that good movies, meaning "The Citadel," "Four Feathers," "Wuthering Heights" and "Dodsworth"—all of artistic caliber—are too scarce in the Hollywood production schedule. Reading, too, is suffering. What does the flood of picture magazines and utterly realistic novels indicate if it is not a decline in the desire to read, digest, and think to a conclusion? "Boogie-Woogie" is certainly engendering no favor for good music—referring to the symphonies or the light classics of Strauss and Victor Herbert. *The New York Times*, in the light of these advances, looks more sheepish and outmoded every day with its fine, solid principles.

Nor are the arts our only indication of the world's mental decline. Chaos and misdirected effort run rampant everywhere. To begin with, business, seeking to re-acclimate itself with the full-capacity times of old, is too worried, seemingly, with its balance sheets and cost reports, to be as visionary as it might be. Two murders and three divorces dot every front page. A tired business man's wife catches her husband buying fur coats for his secretaries, and onward the battle rages. Youth used to do chores around the house in another generation. Yet the general impression of today's moderns is well nigh obstructed in the desire for frills and bubble-gum, with here and there a few punctuations of smart talk. Oh well, they live happy, juke-box lives, full of pandemonium and love on the run. Some day the jitterbug music will cease and those little heads with the cute long bobs will have to think. And what preparation, what practice have they had to make a momentous decision? If they are lucky, possibly they will be able to keep on with higher studies, that's one way for them to do as Scarlet did—dodge the issue and think about it tomorrow. The old escapement tendency works again.

(Perhaps this rude awakening and inevitable coming around to solid thinking is what the ancients mean when they warn us of the cold, cruel world and the shock that lies after graduation.)

If this world as we live in it today could be set to music—what a shrieking, heart-rending, discord would ascend to heaven. Surely, we're fifteen pounds heavier and two inches taller than our parents back in '17, but when will the man come around and tell us about the gray matter we lost? Kipling was a great anticipator when he spoke of our rulers becoming "drunk with sight of power," the misapplication of which will certainly bring them before the awfulness of "hell's hot jurisdiction."

How rushing and unfathomable is not our present condition; how urgent the charge to return to thought for a solution.

Somewhat unafraid of criticism, then this writer poses the need for thought as a possible remedy. Commerce, improved living, inventions, study and research have not really elevated man's status, for his machines



of war are still wreaking destruction upon his own brothers. Now that all of the other suggestions have failed, thought seems to offer the only vehicle away from the shouting and the tumult.

To cope with every imaginable problem down through the eons of civilization, man has had to call upon thought as his ally. In this twentieth century—to bring the matter up to date—there seems to be a number of basic ills awaiting the touch of a thoughtful hand. Pausing on the verge of another war with its attendant evils, our own position is highly unstable. There you have one force crying for correction. The increasing amount of subjectivity—born out earlier with the arts as a special example—must be stemmed soon, for it is another of those widespread undesirables which is ready to snatch up the remaining few. And is it not high time that thinking set about erasing agnosticism from the current scene? Then we must cope with the rising industrial tendency toward speed, a fallacy which has long since had our people timing the parish priest at Mass, and blowing their horns incessantly in traffic—just to save a mere second. And is there not a need for man to leave the passing procession of life for a moment to reason out his own destiny? Surely there must be some way to restore the best things we enjoyed during the good old days. Do we not need to *think* this thing out?

For through thought man can arrive at God. Little wonder, then, that an issue should be made around this process, when there are precisely half of the world's near two billion souls who are totally pagan. It appears that unless we do effect a return for God, the peaceful lowing of contented cattle "o'er the lea" will be silenced for some time to come. When times are peaceful and man has his thoughts soberly upon God, then only are his feet on the ground, his head in the clouds.

If thought is one of the vital needs, it cannot be appreciated to the full extent without encountering the usual obstacles. From the philosophical viewpoint, man must first reckon with the opposite tendencies of his senses. A lot of things enter in to make him wish he were not of the genus animal. His sight, hungry to see the direct item instead of the printed word, misleads him into the picture magazines. Dance chorus routines in a movie have more appeal over a scene from "Tale of Two Cities." Appreciation of fine music calls for quiet reflection. But the senses deter him again when he takes the easy way with music. It is a toss-up between Beethoven and "boogie-woogie," and, because it is the easy way out, people take the stomp over the studious every time.

Man's attempts at intellectual perfection are also stymied time and again by his emotions. He derives joy quickest from the fleeting, passing things such as the true story "mags" and the gag-a-minute comedies. A beloved son is accidentally run down while playing in the street. His family is so stricken with grief in its darkest moment as to harbor ill will against the innocent driver. Students pile up bias and prejudice against a certain professor or a course of studies until their feelings give way to



actual hate for this particular allergy of theirs. An age of wealth has shown man how to spend more upon himself, with the result that he becomes pain-conscious and soft. Give him an unforeseen tire-change on the road and the next day finds him consulting the doctor about his ailments. Fear of ridicule from fellow students often holds back the best activity of so many men. And then, love. How many have not been carried away so completely by some passing infatuation so as to dim their real mind?

And through these senses and emotions work the common side-glances of our everyday existence. With man in the world are such thought-destroyers as noise and the various aspects of talk. There is little peace of mind in a ten-story tenement. And meditation is again thrown for a loss by blaring radios and five o'clock traffic. Even man's own love to be with his fellowmen is no special asset to original thought. They are constantly in conference, which very often amounts to siding in with the other man's way of looking at a problem. At noon they have business luncheons; late of an afternoon they drop in at the club—or so it was in England; we have cocktail lounges here—where they merely adopt other's thoughts rather than contribute any of their own.

Convention is another barrier to be broken down on the way. Conformity to "we've always done it this way" is one of the most stubborn fifth columnists against good thought. Man never "gave it a thought," and he is too preoccupied to hear you tell why he must bring about a change now. People are never born in such a rut. Little children, for example, are ideal as distinct personalities. "The Jones baby is always doing the cutest things"—things he certainly never learned from his father. As the child grows it manifests more interest in things. It tries to figure out Grandpa's ticking watch, a pile of blocks, or why the street-car rings a bell as it passes. Here is thought in its earliest stages, growing by leaps. The last stage of utter originality in youth probably comes with the "asking-questions" epoch. They want to know about the clouds, color, God, even themselves. By these insistent queries, the parents, caught up so often on the most elemental things, begin to nod their heads sagely at poor Johnnie, and say "how glad we'll be when he's more mature and can think for himself." When as a matter of fact, Johnnie grows up and starts imitating people and things he perceives about him, and there, definitely, most of the "thinking for himself" stops, and not starts, as the parents imagine.

So perhaps Johnnie grows up, comes to college and reads such a fable as this. And when he sets about trying to conceive of thought, he is besieged by still more obstacles. His pet obsessions come to light and stay him. He might have an inferiority complex to reckon with, or a "non-thinking" disposition to rid himself of.

But as there are obstacles to confront those who would take thought seriously, so are there various aids in this matter of the mind. First,

would-be thinkers must not let a move for better thought go by your door to that serious lad down the hall. Accept the fact that thought is for you. It is anything but an issue you can recommend for the next one. How casual is not your reference to a bloody street fight you saw last night. Only until it happens to you do you become hushed and impressed—and thoughtful. Sudden death works the same way. Oh the difference when it strikes, not your roommate—but you! Thought calls for the same kind of treatment. It is highly important that you realize that thought calls out through the desert of perplexities to you.

Use of principles is another aid to thought. If a man begins his thought process with the axiom "it is raining outside and I must take precautions to keep from catching cold," how many less sore throats and colds would there not be.

To get these mental processes off to a flying start, psychiatrists advise moderation in all things physical—sleeping, eating, exercising, and so on. When you are seeking to solve something unusually difficult—whether it is calculus or a coy phrase to the little lady—Dimmet advises "complete immobility, a peaceful cigarette, or a cup of tea," before you return to your task. A few minutes looking through an open window in calm reflection, or a brief stroll under the campus trees "will bring you nearer to the legitimate fountain of your thoughts than anything else."

In such a manner might a modern get around to thought. All of the great minds among the ancients began with seclusion. Even Thoreau spent a year of total isolation in a house he built himself. Christ went into the desert when he wanted to elude the fickle multitude in favor of private meditation. "A man is never less alone than when he is alone," said Swift. Dickens might serve as an example for this argument of seclusion. His, however, was internal. When he wrote his London novels, he spent many of the nights walking meditatively through the streets, thinking out his tales. Here, under cover of darkness, his only distraction was an occasional bleary-eyed policeman or a straying cat. Stripped of the many unnecessities of day, his mind functioned far more smoothly.

In going about thought, fear of criticism from the rabble can be stifled by the gradual development of thinking into a habit. Next time you go shopping in town, try to arrange your stops like a delivery man, in the most systematic order. Give your conversation a moment's reflection and note the improvement in the things you say, and the lesser number of "spots" your hasty tongue talks you into. Take a tip from Ecclesiasticus in the Bible wherein it is written "Be not faint-hearted in thy mind." Catch hold of this vague idea of introspection, which is, after all, little more than "looking inward at your own mental stream."

Today's world would never be as aching as it is had there been some of this clear, desirable thinking underlying our decisions and decrees. Picture Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin as peaceful European family men



with a manner as unselfish as Chang Kai Shek, the rebuilder of China. Imagine Spain without her recent civil war, and America without the Selective Service which disturbs so many.

How peaceful would it not be to come home from the office every night and read that our battle ships are being made into new bridges, and that business is normal and strike-less; everyone has a fatted calf tethered in the back yard, at least, if not two cars in the garage. Economists are writing that business should never waver again as it did during the war era, due to the uncanny and "thoughtful" practices of our business moguls. The budget is so well balanced that the Government wants to spend its war money building new hospitals and libraries, and for the endowment of newly married couples. Like a bad dream will be the spectre of a 30% corporation profits tax which hovers gloomily over 1941. If only all our feverish war efforts of the present could be straightened out according to the words of Pope Pius—thought-laden words, you may be sure.

For if this world is to be bettered, the process will start with you and me, and all the other integral units of civil society. Only in such a manner can the whole become a real unity.

Thought offers the answer, for according to McCosh, a Scotch-American educator of the last century:

*"In the end, thought rules the world. There are times when impulses and passions are more powerful, but they soon expend themselves; while mind, acting constantly, is ever ready to drive them back and work when their energy is exhausted."*



# EDITORIALS

## Gratitude

EDWARD G. ANCEL

How long is it since you have encountered the expression "gratitude" in the only meaning which makes a grain of sense?

Thinking of gratitude, we must never merely envision kind words for favors received — but, rather, a warm sense of appreciation for good deeds in our favor, and a desire to do something in return.

Looking hastily at our own college horizon, do we really possess this warm sense of appreciation and a desire to do something in return, especially for things which do not directly benefit us? As Seneca once said, "We can be thankful to a friend for a few acres or a little money; and yet for the freedom and command of the whole earth, and for the great benefit of our being, or life, health, and reason, we look upon ourselves as under no obligation." It is in this sense that we lack gratitude.

Our appreciation for the small every-day acts of kindness ought to be broader than life itself—for do not God, our forefathers and ancestors come in for reverence, together with parents, roommates and every-day associates?

Consider, for example, that our parents deserve something in return for all the sacrifices they have made for us. Raising Christian gentlemen has never been a snap-finger task—father and mother will assent to that—yet we take on an attitude that it is a matter of fact process. We reach a certain immature stage and take on a blase, "don't-ask-me-questions" air. We no longer listen to words from loved ones at home; we tell them that their ideas are too much like three-quarter time in an age of swing. As a matter of fact, we have a command from Heaven to listen to them, even though their words may seem homely and irrelevant to us. They have earned our appreciation for what they have already done. No matter what we do, we cannot, through human effort, do enough to repay our parents. Why not bring them happiness in the best way we can while we still have them — the proper attitude at home and frequent letters from school can move mountains.

These continuous little acts of kindness and thoughtfulness are really greater than one immense act of goodness shown once a year. Keep this small service true service while it lasts!

Besides the gratitude due from children to their parents, there is also gratitude due our friends and associates. This obligation does not only

consist in doing good deeds in return. Why not forget the "I come first and only" theory and confer a benefit where none has been received?

Any analyzer of the modern college is undoubtedly puzzled at the amazing self-centeredness he finds among today's students. Few of them perform little altruistic duties outside of their own small circle of friends. This isolationist trend among college men seems to be a sort of companion piece to a similar condition in our large cities. Students are turning, in some instances, into a fine group of apartment-house dwellers — people who know their neighbors no better than to grunt at them as they pass in the corridor. "Get without giving," they call it.

More of the old-fashioned community interest — the kind which headed into a decline with the passing of the sewing bee and the log-rolling functions of old — is precisely what both the studying and working world seek unknowingly today. A genuine appreciation of the other man's problems — especially when accompanied with a kind deed — is an excellent way to reduce your own trials. Helping others before they help you is a fine purifier of the spirit.

And it is a form of gratitude, even if there is nothing in the way of direct thanks concerned with the deed. For if it is nothing else, can it not be considered as a kind of gratitude to God for placing you in a fortunate enough position to be able to assist a fellow-man?

Gratitude in this sense is not limited, for there are numerous ways of expressing it, as Christ's own life proved. We can always find some way of being polite and courteous to our neighbors, and whenever we have the opportunity we should be willing to aid others, especially our elders and superiors.

Then, more remotely, there is an obligation due to our ancestors, who made it possible for us to live in a country with freedom. After all our ancestors had to go through to obtain this freedom for us and a right to vote, we could at least show our appreciation by using the rights they fought for. But what do we do? We either don't vote at all or else vote for the candidate who makes the best promises or gives us the most for our vote. Is this gratitude?

These closing lines from Shakespeare show how great was the store set by this praiseworthy quality:

"I hate ingratitude more in a man,  
Than lying, vainness, babbling, drunkenness,  
Or any taint of vice."



## Book Reviews

*Broadsides*, by Richard Daly, New York; MacMillan Co., 1940, 528 pp. pp,

ARTHUR LOEW

To the average person the sea has always had a rather fascinating attraction, a romantic quality that allures and draws, a quality that excites adventure. Just such is the novel by Daly, an adventure and romance of the sea.

As a mere lad the hero became acquainted with a student at college in Dublin, an under officer on one of his majesty's ships. Later, after an attempted rebellion in Galway, Ireland, that failed, this lad of seventeen, although he had a rather deep hatred for the English, joined the English Navy for personal reasons of revenge against a French sailor. He was cut off from home, as his uncle and brother practically disowned him as a traitor but under the guidance of Giles, his college friend, he soon attained a second home, and a ring of friends. He was soon eating at fashionable dinners and taking lessons from his master as to how to drink and deport himself in society. On ship he was an intelligent student, his personality was open and inviting. He always loved to have a friendly argument and on account of these qualities soon had a rather curious circle of naval friends, with whom he could enjoy whiskey, canary, plans, and views on life. Having quickly graduated from mid-ship school he was set to teaching others, the first of which was Andrew, a brawny Scotch lad, who had a love for life, rum and fights, whether a sea battle, a pugilistic fray or a duel over a stolen kiss. He took life as it came and really reveled in it. The exact opposite came to Edward's ship soon after, a "wee bonny lad," Brian O'Neill, who always thought that fate was against him, ready to push him over the brink. He had little love for life, was pessimistic, and for an Irishman as was Edward, he did not carry the bona fide Irish qualities and character. As they went through fights and storms, graduating until they were nearly all of the same rank, they became three inseparable companions. Through nearly all the remaining years on the sea, they ate, drank, and fought side by side in battle and cared for each other when injured as though they were brothers. When their work was over, they soon fell back to their old ranks of opposition in views and philosophies.

The author has not only written of life on ship, and given us only the romance of the sea, but he also speaks of London and a dark-haired Irish lassie, Brian's sister, Mary, whom Edward found rather intriguing and beautiful, whom he later crushed by a remark only to come back with the desire to put himself once again high in her esteem. Mingled with this romance is the romance of Giles and Edna. Edna, who although

the wife of Giles, was a mother, sweetheart and sister to Edward throughout their years together.

In writing this book the author has given us three distinct philosophies, closely interwoven, in some respects alike, yet almost always entirely different. Edward was a true Irish lad, with a sense of honor, love and duty as one would expect in an Irish lad. However, in regard to Edward's faith it is a little queer how he acts. A staunch Catholic, he overthrows his religion to work and fight for something he hates. His religion stopped when he entered the navy and no more is said on that score. To me, there is seemingly no understanding on the part of the author in regards to how a man would fall, especially at first, deprived of his religion, the pride, in most cases, of the Irish race. Then there is the case of his brother, Michael, who had a rather shady character and who is not heard from nor seen after a meeting in Italy. It rather leaves us wondering what has become of him in later life.

Then comes the characters with whom he daily associated, his bosom companions. Andrew, a man of muscular proportions, was an habitual drunkard and hot tempered man who showed respect only when compelled to do so. Life was worth living just to be living and enjoying it, especially the more brutal parts. He never did become a cultured gentleman. His greatest joy seemed to be his ability to aim a cannon where it could shed the most blood in the fastest manner possible.

"Wee bonny Brian," the third lad to join them, was of a silent, pensive mood with a deep sense of religion, yet at times pagan. Life for him rarely showed a bright side. His was always a dark cloud covering the sun, an innocent man in a world of toil and temptation. Never up to the time of his death, did he fully understand just what life really meant.

With three characters so utterly different, daily coming in contact with each other within the narrow confines of a ship, two young ladies waiting, one in London and the other in Ireland, how could a story be dead? The author divides the book into chapters according to years. His wealth of description is vivid and accounts of action are quick and concise. It flows with an ease that leaves one unmindful of time, wholly absorbed in the life portrayed before him.

*Fame Is the Spur*, by Howard Spring, New York: Literary Guild of America, Inc., 1940, 726 pp.

KENNETH L. MARLIN

Howard Spring's latest novel is like the unexpected dashing of ice water in your face: it electrifies you, makes you tingle with surprise and amazement, leaves your intellect feeling strangely cleansed and freshened—and this is a mental state all too rare in this world where



tales have become monstrous, grotesque things that crush you beneath their weight of bitterness and misery and hopeless despair.

*Fame Is the Spur* is a conglomeration of lives and their idiosyncracies; it is the story of many extremely individualistic people and their influences on, and reactions to, and relations with one another. There are so many quaint personalities in *Fame Is the Spur*, but there is one who remains where the rest have faded into oblivion—J. Hamer Shawcross. Throughout the story, Mr. Spring sketches the parallel growth and development of John Hamer Shawcross and those who aid him (and even those who hinder him) in his triumphant struggle for fame and position. Still Hamer remains always the dominant figure, the pivotal point around which all action revolves. The other characters serve merely to enhance Hamer's burning pursuit of eminence.

As a child John Shawcross wasn't strikingly different from another lad of his station in life, perhaps a bit more sensitive, probably physically less rugged, but otherwise, quite ordinary—quite ordinary until he became engulfed in the flame of ambition, until fame became the spur of his life, until living became but a vehicle for his zeal, until friendship became but an instrument of his aspirations, until fame and distinction and power became his only obsessions. His every thought was toward the preparation for that fame that he was utterly confident would be his. All he needed was time, time to study and think and write, time to suck knowledge and wisdom from a particularly fertile assemblage of friendships, time to develop and mature. And when his chance came, J. Hamer Shawcross was ready. His body hewed into a keen, muscular Adonis, his mind forged and disciplined into a keen, sharp instrument of thinking, Hamer was admirably adapted to meet and conquer all opposition.

His success was phenomenal. His career began as a labor politician with a remarkable gusto for oratory. "Ah, my friends! the bitter life of the poor, adding penny to penny like some diligent church mouse, as much entitled, surely, as any other mouse to run free and delighted in the granaries . . ." With such colorful passages, Hamer's addresses shook the "multitudinous oppressed" to frenzied support of his proposals, and the autocratic factions in power to offer him tempting rewards for the reversal of his patronage. And what more is necessary to an opportunist? J. Hamer Shawcross had everything, and his future was fabulous with promises and limited only by his ability—and that was unlimited.

The years rush by in a swirl of exciting and momentous events, and leaping from triumph to triumph, Hamer at last reaches the pinnacle of his aspirations—a Lordship in the House of Lords. Wealth, influence, fame, all have been won; poverty, mediocrity, limitations of birth, all have been overcome. Nothing more is to be got in this life but the

gradual shrinking of the body, and the fading of the intellect, and finally that experience to be had by every man—death.

And had Hamer all that he wanted from life? "Have I? Have I?" he asked himself. And then he knew that he had. "Clear of all evasions and self-deceiving, he knew that what he had wanted was nothing more than the fame that was now his." And how much he had learned! Looking back down the corridor of the years, he could see that politicians and such pretenders were but the subtle forms of parasitical growths who had convinced society that they were necessary in the scheme of things, while, in reality, without them, the world would be a much less troubled and less disturbed place in which to live. He could see that those reformers struggling for the replacement of a different form of government, say communism, were doomed to failure, for "he saw that it was all founded upon a fallacy: The fallacy that man could be just to man." And so in the late autumn of his life he stood like a great Oak that had stubbornly weathered the mighty thrusts of the elements, but which now, proudly, bravely, unprotestingly, awaited that force against which there is no resistance — time.

Seldom do you find an author capable of matching Howard Spring's uncommon versatility. Whether it be the emotional heights of an enticing oration, or a description of the wretched habitations of the poor, or of falling "asleep there where he had known his love that night when the snow fell upon the hut pitilessly, relentlessly, like the falling of the years which give so much that in the end they may take all away," Mr. Spring is wizardly in the artistic expression of his ideas and beliefs. Too, there is in Howard Spring's writing a force and rapidity of movement that fairly hypnotizes you, impels you onward at such an amazing pace, makes you clutch the book and deeply resent having to relinquish it until you have finished the last page. With his characterizations, Mr. Spring is equally adroit. His characters are living, breathing, highly animated beings who play their parts to perfection and who linger with you, long after the reading has been done.

*Revolt*, by John Bunker, New York: Campion Books, Ltd., 1940, 29 pp.

ROBERT CAUSLAND

Being a human, John Bunker felt the disillusionment of all common people inhabiting the world. He heard the cries of the mistreated poor and aged, the mutterings of the cheated working class against bitter oppression. He heard the pleas of men fall upon the deaf ears of power, and he listened as they questioned whether there was any justice left for them. Mr. Bunker looked down into the hearts of men and saw



the coming of revolution—a bloodless revolution—a revolution in which man would attempt to gain his rightful heritage and God's love.

Few have had the insight and courage to voice these fearful facts. But John Bunker, upon hearing the muffled accusations made them articulate and fashioned them into a deathless challenge in the stirring message of *Revolt*.

His poem depicts world conditions as they have been since the beginning of the twentieth century. The sweeping stock market crash of the late twenties, and the rapid change of world conditions which lead to the reign of terror and strife in all lands. The author accuses lurid writers and corrupt power-mad men for the condition of loose morality existing today. Dictators and their cruel form of government also feel the scourge of his pen.

Too long has the world turned its back on the Law Giver, and during this time helpless man has attempted to compose his own laws of life. But any place where these attempts have been made we can see only disaster. Now the world is facing a great crisis in which one of two forces alone can be victorious—either good or evil. We are told in the simple but timely message of *Revolt* that the good shall win out, because God Who is all good, cannot be destroyed. All peoples of the world are told to have courage, exercise God's greatest commandment of love, keep patience, and in the end the just alone shall receive justice!

Yet Mr. Bunker does not only condemn but he also offers the only solution by which men can gain the one victory lasting longer than time. The voice of the "vision" summarizes the entire thought of the poem when he states the essence of man's eternal desire in a few simple lines:

"Still it remains — the not-to-be-evaded,  
Austere injunction: 'Love one another,'  
Turn here, turn there, twist in or out, O Man,  
To this you must come: 'Love your enemies.'  
'Pray for them that do despitefully  
Use and persecute you.' 'Bear ye  
One another's burdens.' So stands  
The law — stern paradox, which is at once  
Your cruel reward and happy Golgotha,  
Your peace, your woe, your loss, your joyful gain,  
Temporal defeat and lasting victory."

The poem is written in two voices; men crying out their accusations and the voice of the vision, who is the poet speaking his convictions concerning the scenes which are portrayed. The author's rhythmic style and presentation of ideas make this poem to be the magnificent work of art it is. His free flowing verse is invigorating to read, and having once

begun this work one finds the lines so compelling that the poem must be completed before one can turn away from it.

While reading *Revolt* one's emotions are highly disturbed but the sincerity of thought expressed balances the emotional strain. As the poem gains momentum the reader realizes the trueness of the author's ideals and before the climax is reached one finds himself wishing to begin another crusade to wrest not the Holy Land — but the entire suffering world from the grasp of evil.



# Exchanges

FRANCIS L. KINNEY

Any survey which is made in a field is made for a purpose. A survey of the thematic contents of college literary magazines likewise has a definite purpose, the discovering of the subjects in which Catholic young men and women have most interest and the general trends of thought revealed in their writing. Both our survey and conclusions are licit for they are based upon a thorough research of many Catholic publications from all over the United States. It is our hope that the publications of our survey will show each college literary magazine how their efforts are similar or dissimilar as the case may be.

It is unnecessary to develop explicit details concerning the standard departments that make up every real journal, namely, editorials, book reviews, cinema reviews, local news, verse, and fiction. We naturally expect these and hence their appearance in every magazine is of little note. Subjects for good editorials were inadequate. At least 80% of the magazines in our survey used two themes for editorials, "Softness of Modern Youth" and "Decay of the American Frontiersman" which, in the final analysis, amount to the same thing. Even with this subject matter there is little originality of thought and lack of coherence. If editorials are meant to accomplish something, why cannot there be some thoughts expressed on a subject vital to the average reader? Concerning book reviews, we may all congratulate ourselves on the choice of books for review, especially for choosing new books by both Catholic and non-Catholic authors. In preparing this survey I counted ten reviews of "*Murder in a Nunnery*" by Eric Shepherd, twenty-five reviews of "*I Married Adventure*" and thirty reviews of "*No Other Man*" by Alfred Noyes. Incidentally, *Measure* also included reviews of these identical books. Most of the magazines devoted space to stories of fiction, all of which are diverse both in subject matter and style. Again I must praise the *Mundelein Review* in this field. Miss Virginia Coffey and Miss Virginia Cheatham deserve encouragement as well as congratulations in the field of the short story. *Mundelein* has a legitimate right to be proud of such excellent contributions to the literary world. . . . It is well that in times such as these young men and women do have a serious outlook on life. Perusing and pondering upon the beautiful verse in these college works one finds verification of this fact, that youth in our schools have a love for truth and beauty, for all that makes for culture and refinement. The themes of the poems are common enough but the presentation and infused new flame make them scintillate with life. Reviews and sketches of local importance are all handled with styles as diversified as the news itself. These features give the literary magazine its universal appeal.

Having dispensed with the ordinary features, the reader next looks for the articles which in the long run make the literary publication to be what it is. Alone in these treatises the college student has opportunity to express his views on a question, using as a basis the sound philosophy with which it is imbued. In these expressions of thought it is possible to judge whether or not the student is well read and sincere or unlearned and superficial. The article or essay to be successful must necessarily be of college quality. Indeed, the quality must be such that the reading is not easy but forces the reader to consider and judge, to agree or disagree. What, then, is the general subject matter of the essays and articles? At this point in my research, I, myself, became so surprised at the consistency with which certain articles appeared that I re-reviewed to assure myself that it was really the case. I suppose it is only natural that war discussion should pervade each magazine. Every college student is affected in some degree by the world situation and the thinking ones are prone to express their opinion in the form of literature, chiefly the essay. Thus it is that we find articles with such titles as "War Analysis," "Philosophy of War," "Defense Preparation," "Chemistry in War," "Warfare, Modern and Homeric," etc. On the patriotic side are "Essay on American Democracy," "Development of America," etc. These treatises are broad but descending to the individual we find, "The Typical American," "American Ways," "Introspection—1941." Summing up, our student writers display strong convictions and show themselves to be 100% Americans. In the *Xavier Athenaeum* there is a particularly fine article discussing Charley Chaplin's movie, "The Great Dictator," in which Hitler and other European notorieties are satirized. Likewise, among the war themes there are a great number of essays dealing with the teaching of the Church in regard to such disasters, and their justification.

Scholastic philosophy is the subject of a surprisingly great number of essays. In the *Albertinum*, published by the students of Albertus Magnus College, New Haven, Connecticut, there is a discussion of Jacques Maritain's views on Thomism in America. Mr. Maritain emphasized the practicability of Scholasticism to the student who is really the master of its principles. In the philosophical view the following were found, "Lessening of Aesthetic Values," "Kant on Causation," and "The Art of Introspection." Philosophy, to many, seems to be the study of just so many intangibles but these articles are the work of students who realize the actual need and value of a correct knowledge of the supra-sensible. Speculation in this field must be deep, else it fails. The appearance of more of such essays would be beneficial not only to the reader but to the author. It is only when a thought is crystallized in the printed word that an author erases all doubt from his mind.

Biography and character analysis is another prevalent theme in our publications. In fact, I discovered three biographies of Father Tabb



and evaluations of his writings, several treatises upon Geoffrey Chaucer and John Milton. It was rather odd that Shakespeare did not make an appearance in a single magazine that I reviewed. This being the Jubilee year of the Jesuits, essays upon them and their work are numerous but each has been developed along a special phase or period in their history. There are discussions on famous contemporary personages, saints and political figures. The biographical scope is seemingly universal with perhaps more emphasis on literary men and women than on scientists and figures in other walks of life. Due to the nature of the pursuits of our rising journalists this emphasis is to be expected and, of course, encouraged. The consistency with which certain authors are represented is the only remarkable thing that I can say my survey disclosed.

In the realm of pure Catholicity all the magazines are outstanding. Liturgy is the chief consideration of most of the essays. Our ancient heritage with its rich, fine culture finds new warmth and beauty in these appreciative writings. Liturgical art, music, and architecture are a few of the subjects which have been considered. Materialism and its utter worldliness has had no effect upon our young college journalists who are aware that spiritual values cannot be disregarded in the production of fine literature. It is only when the material things are united to the spiritual that they have value. Writings in this field reveal the fact all the more lucidly to us. Catholic workers in art, science, music, literature and sculpture form the themes of many serious work which are informative and yet not moralizing. Catholic sociology, Catholic youth congresses, Catholic ethics of war—all contribute to universality.

Questions pertinent to the student are discussed with enthusiasm and very often with vehemence, especially in publications from men's colleges and universities. Summing up, the greatest question revolves around the student council and its place in the administration of a college, the organization of student forums wherein questions may be "thrashed" out by all the students expressing their personal feelings on the problem. Likewise there are articles encouraging symposiums as a means for gathering Catholic thought on specific subjects. On the whole, the students, in presenting these ideas, do not seem arrogant but view the matters objectively, weighing the advantages against the disadvantages.

In this brief space it is, of course, impossible to review all the articles which were written on subjects outside the fields of those which I have mentioned. On the whole, I can say that the thematic material is all-inclusive. It would not be in place to offer comments on particulars, since in the beginning I limited myself to generalities. Such a wealth of really representative work is found in contrast to so few defects that critical comment would be considered meticulous and absurd. Finally, our Catholic college literary publications do reveal a body of young men and women, strong in faith, with courage to set forth the Catholic point of view in literature that is real art.

When, having completed a survey such as this, one calls to mind the fact that only one in ten magazines includes an exchange department it is only fair to ask the legitimate question, "Why?" An attempt to fully explain the difficulties prohibiting these departments from literary magazines is beyond our scope. Instead, we may only postulate the reasons basing them upon the survey just completed. First of all, most magazines have discarded or scrimped the exchanges because they have failed to see their practical value. They reason that exchanges take space which could be utilized to better advantage, practically speaking. Those who have this idea are possibly mistaken, for, speaking of practicality, the exchanges represent the only practical part of a college magazine, excluding the proceeds from subscriptions. Secondly, some criticize the exchanges as being too arbitrary, that is, one and the other are continually praising each other to the high heavens. We admit a particle of truth here, but the fault lies not in the exchange idea objectively, but in the inefficiency of the particular editors. Those who have never attempted an exchange department are, doubtless, under misapprehensions such as these. Why not give Exchanges a fair chance, at least? There is a real need for unified action among our colleges; it is not merely a social gesture. Omission of this department is tantamount to declaring self-sufficiency and when that point has been reached—beware! There is no intimidation meant here on *Measure's* part but only a frank and open plea.